

Message Text

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63

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

INRE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 AID-05 SY-05 SCCT-01 SCSE-00

SCA-01 /071 W

----- 068691

O R 261900Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 8326

INFO AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL BUKAVU

USIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 DAR ES SALAAM 1709

USIA FOR IBS, IPS

NAIROBI ALSO FOR VOA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC (SMUTS, SMITH, HUNTER)

SUBJECT: THREE KIDNAPPED AMCITS: PRESS CONFERENCE

REF: DAR ES SALAAM 1708

FOLLOWING IS TRANSCRIPT OF PRESS CONFERENCE Q AND A PERIOD
AFTER AMBASSADOR CARTER AND MISS SMUTS STATEMENTS DELIVERED:

AMBASSADOR CARTER: I WILL TAKE QUESTIONS NOW.

BARBARA SMUTS HAS BEEN THROUGH A TREMENDOUS ORDEAL THIS PAST
WEEK. SHE WAS ROWED BACK ACROSS THE LAKE ON SATURDAY NIGHT.

THAT WAS A 15-HOUR EXPERIENCE ON LAKE TANGANYIKA IN A FISHING

CANOE AND SO SHE IS STILL GROGGY ON HER FEET. I WOULD HOPE

THAT IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS PUT TO HER THAT YOU WOULD MAKE

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THEM AS BRIEF AND AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. SHE WILL TRY

TO BE RESPONSIVE IN HER OWN RIGHT AND I WILL TRY TO RESPOND TO THOSE QUESTIONS THAT YOU WISH TO PUT TO ME.

1. QUESTIONS PUT TO THE AMBASSADOR:

Q. CAN YOU COMMENT ON THE GENERAL TONE OF THE MEETING BETWEEN YOURSELF AND THE PRESIDENT?

A. IT HAS BEEN AS ALL OF THE MEETINGS HAVE BEEN WITH THE TANZANIAN OFFICIALS, ONE THAT WAS HELPFUL AND ONE IN WHICH WE WERE TRYING TO BE CONSTRUCTIVE, BUT THE TANZANIANS STATED VERY CLEARLY THEIR POSITIONS ON THE CONDITIONS AND THOSE POSITIONS WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO YOU MOMENTARILY.

Q. MR. AMBASSADOR, THEY ALREADY HAVE BEEN. THE PRESIDENT'S PRESS SECRETARY SAID THAT THE TANZANIAN GOVERNMENT FLATLY REJECTS ALL DEMANDS AND THAT THIS IS A FINAL STATEMENT, TANZANIA WILL NOT BE BLACKMAILED. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THIS IN VIEW OF THE AMERICAN LIVES AT STAKE?

A. I . . . YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT THE LIVES AT STAKE, THREE OF THEM ARE AMERICAN AND ONE OF THEM IS DUTCH. WE ARE NOT WITHOUT HOPE THAT A RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM CAN FREE THESE REMAINING THREE STUDENTS, AND I HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THERE ARE WAYS IN WHICH THIS CAN BE DONE. I'M NOT AT LIBERTY TO GO INTO THOSE AT THIS TIME. I WILL SIMPLY SAY THAT WE ARE NOT WITHOUT HOPE AS TO HOW WE CAN RECOVER THESE THREE STUDENTS SAFELY.

Q. DOES THE TANZANIA POSITION HAVE YOUR SUPPORT?

A. THIS . . . TANZANIA IS A SOVEREIGN COUNTRY IN WHICH WE ARE FUNCTIONING. THEY HAVE THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR CRIMES THAT OCCUR ON THEIR GROUNDS. WE'RE WORKING IN CONSULTATION WITH THEM. WE CANNOT ESTABLISH POLICY POSITIONS FOR THEM. WE RESPECT THE POSITIONS THEY HAVE . . . MUST TAKE FOR THEMSELVES. THEY ARE AS CONCERNED -- THEY HAVE EXPRESSED THIS CONCERN -- ABOUT THE LIVES AND HOW TO SAVE THEM AS WE ARE. WHILE THE STATEMENT THEY HAVE ISSUED MAY SOUND TO YOU TO BE A HARSH AND UNYIELDING ONE, I HAVE REASON TO BE HOPEFUL THAT SOMETHING CAN BE DONE TO SAVE THE LIVES OF THESE THREE PEOPLE.

Q. IS IT POSSIBLE THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT MIGHT REACT TO THE DEMANDS?

A. WELL, THE DEMANDS WERE NOT PUT TO US. THEY WERE PUT TO THE TANZANIAN GOVERNMENT. I AM NOW ... I HAVE JUST NOW
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A MOMENT OR TWO AGO TRANSMITTED THIS INFORMATION TO MY DEPARTMENT OF STATE. I AM AWAITING ADVICE FROM MY DEPARTMENT AND MY GOVERNMENT ON OUR NEXT SUGGESTIONS.

Q. AND WHAT ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT OF ZAIRE? HAVE YOU BEEN IN ANY CONTACT . . . DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT ACTION, IF ANY, THEY'RE TAKING OR WHAT ROLE THEY'LL PLAY?

A. I CANNOT COMMENT ON THAT. I HAVE NOT BEEN MYSELF. MY GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN AND UNDOUBTEDLY WILL HAVE TO AFTER RE-

CEIVING THIS INFORMATION TODAY, BUT I CANNOT SPECULATE AS
TO WHAT THEIR POSITION WILL BE.

2. QUESTIONS DIRECTED AT SMUTS:

Q. CAN YOU ELABORATE IN ANY DETAIL AS TO THE SIZE OF THE
GROUP OF PEOPLE THAT KIDNAPPED THE STUDENTS AND WERE IN CAMP
TO WHEREWB

AIIT WAS THAT THEY TOOK YOU?

A. THERE WERE APPROXIMATELY 30 ARMED MEN WHO KIDNAPPED US
AND A LARGE NUMBER OF SOLDIERS AT THE CAMP. I HAVE NO IDEA
HOW MANY SPECIFICALLY.

Q. WERE THEY ALL IN UNIFORM EVEN AT THE CAMP?

A. YES, ALL OF THE SOLDIERS HAD UNIFORMS.

Q. HOW FAR INLAND WERE YOU, BARBARA? DID THEY TAKE YOU FAR
FROM THE SHORE IN ZAIRE?

A. I HAVE NO COMMENT ON THAT.

Q. WHAT ARE YOUR PERSONAL PLANT NOW, BARBARA?

A. I HAVE NOT THOUGHT ABOUT THAT IN DETAIL. I'M GOING TO
STAY IN DAR FOR AWHILE UNTIL THE STUDENTS ARE RELEASED.

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UNCLAS SECTION 2 OF 2 DAR ES SALAAM 1709

USIA FOR IBS, IPS

NAIROBI ALSO FOR VOA

Q. WERE YOU IN A VILLAGE OR IN TENTS?

A. IN A VILLAGE.

Q. WAS IT IN THE MOUNTAINS OR ON THE FLATS?

A. NO COMMENT ON THAT.

Q. DID THEY APPEAR TO BE WELL ORGANIZED AND WELL EQUIPPED?

A. YES.

Q. CAN YOU ELABORATE ON THAT. I MEAN DID THEY HAVE MANY WEAPONS, LARGE, SMALL, ETC?

A. THEY HAD MANY GUNS.

Q. WERE THERE CIVILIANS IN THE AREA AS WELL?

A. YES.

Q. AND THESE CIVILIANS SEEMED TO SUPPORT THE PEOPLE WHO HAD KIDNAPPED YOU?

A. WELL, ALL OF THESE PEOPLE WERE LIVING TOGETHER IN THE SAME PLACE AND THE CIVILIANS WERE PRESUMABLY SUPPORTING THE SOLDIERS AS FAR AS I COULD TELL.

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Q. DID THEY GIVE YOU ANY INDICATION AS TO WHETHER OR NOT THEY INTENDED TO DO OTHER THINGS LIKE THIS TO GAIN SUPPORT FOR THEIR CAUSE?

A. NO.

Q. BARBARA, WHAT KIND OF A HUT, OR WHATEVER IT WAS, WERE YOU IN WHILE YOU WERE THERE, AND CAN YOU TELL US WHAT YOU HAD TO EAT AND A LITTLE BIT ABOUT HOW YOU LIVED AND PASSED THE TIME?

A. WE LIVED IN A MUD HUT WITH A THATCHED ROOF WITH BEDS MADE OUT OF STRAW THAT WERE OFF THE GROUND AND PERFECTLY COMFORTABLE. THE FOOD WAS ADEQUATE, AND WE WERE KEPT WARM AND DRY.

Q. WHAT DID YOU DO ALL DAY?

A. WELL, MOSTLY WE TALKED TO ONE ANOTHER, TRIED TO HELP ONE ANOTHER KEEP OUR SPIRITS UP.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW IT WAS YOU WERE CHOSEN TO CARRY THE MESSAGES?

A. NO.

Q. DID YOU SAY GOODBYE TO THE OTHER STUDENTS BEFORE YOU LEFT?

A. YES, I SAID GOODBYE AND THAT I WOULD DO EVERYTHING I COULD TO ENSURE THEIR SAFE RELEASE.

Q. DID YOUR COLLEAGUES KNOW THE TERMS OF THEIR RELEASE WHEN YOU LEFT?

A. YES...YES, THEY TPFTO

3. AMBASSADOR CARTER: ARE THERE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?

(QUESTIONS TO AMB CARTER)

Q. CAN YOU TELL US ANYTHING ABOUT QAZANIAN GOVERNMENT HAS MADE ITS POSITION STATEMENT.

WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

A. I CAN'T TELL YOU WHAT HAPPENS NOW. WE ARE JUST AT THE POINT OF HAVING RECEIVED THIS INFORMATION AND WE'RE BEGINNING TO DEVELOP OUR STRATEGY FOR THE NEXT STEP. THIS WILL NECESSARILY TAKE SOME HOURS FOR THAT TO UNFOLD. WE ARE MEETING WITH YOU IMMEDIATELY UPON HAVING LEFT STATE HOUSE AND HAVING REPORTED THE CONVERSATION TO WASHINGTON, SO WE NEED TO HAVE THE TIME TO RECONNOITER AND RE-GROUP.

Q. AMBASSADOR, DID THE TANZANIAN GOVERNMENT CONSULT WITH YOU AT ALL SINCE LAST NIGHT WHEN THE MESSAGES WERE RECEIVED ABOUT WHAT YOU THINK THEY SHOULD DO IN RESPONSE TO THESE DEMANDS?

A. NO, WE DISCUSSED THAT SOMEWHAT LAST NIGHT.

Q. WHAT WAS YOUR POSITION AT THAT TIME?

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A. I CANNOT COMMENT ON THAT.

Q. DO YOU KNOW, IS THE TANZANIAN GOVERNMENT DEPENDING LARGELY ON THE NEIS ORGANIZATIONS TO CARRY THIS MESSAGE BACK TO ZAIRE OR ARE THERE OTHER MEANS?

A. THERE ARE OTHER MEANS, THEY HAVE THEIR OWN MEDIA TO USE. YOU MAY NOT BE AWARE OF THE FACT THAT TANZANIAN RADIO CARRIED THE APPEAL ON SATURDAY. IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THAT APPEAL MAY HAVE TRIGGERED THE RELEASES OF BARBARA.

Q. I WAS INCLUDING ALL NEWS ORGANIZATIONS IN THAT QUESTION. I WONDERED IF THERE WAS SOME OTHER METHOD OF COMMUNICATIONS BESIDES RADIO.

A. THERE ARE OBVIOUSLY OTHER MEANS SITTING WAY GOVERNMENTS COMMUNICATE ONE WITH THE OTHER-- DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS.

Q. BUT YOU'RE COMMUNICATING TO A GROUP OF MEN IN THE BUSH, IS THERE SOME OTHER WAY OF TALKING TO THEM?

A. THERE ARE OTHER WAYS OF TALKING TO THEM.

Q. IS THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT MAKING EFFORTS TO COMMUNICATE WITH THEM OR IS IT DEPENDING SOLELY ON THE TANZANIAN GOVERNMENT?

A. NO COMMENT.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER MEETINGS SCHEDULED?

A. WE JUST GOT THROUGH ONE MEETING -- WE CAN'T GET TO ANOTHER ONE UNTIL WE FINISH THIS ONE.

Q. WELL, IT'S OVER NOW. DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHERS . . .

A. YES, BUT WE HAVE TO GET READY FOR THE NEXT MEETING, SO WE DON'T HAVE A MEETING SET UNTIL WE GET SETTLED TOGETHER. THE TANZANIANS HAVE MET WITH US EVERY TIME WE HAVE ASKED TO MEET WITH THEM. NO PROBLEM SETTING UP A MEETING.

Q. IS THERE A POSSIBILITY THAT ANY OTHER U.S. GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS MAY BE COMING TO TANZANIA?

A. WHY WOULD THAT BE NECESSARY?

Q. I DON'T KNOW, I'M ASKING YOU.

A. IT HADN'T OCCURRED TO ME.

Q. DID THE TANZANIAN GOVERNMENT RELAY PRESIDENT NYERERE CONVEY

TO YOU THAT THE DECISIIN WAS ABSOLUTELY FINAL?

A. NO COMMENT.

AMBASSADOR CARTER: ANYTHING FURTHER? THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

CARTER

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